

supporters of doing what is right, making the Government live up to its promises: CHARLES BASS, HELEN CHENOWETH, BARBARA CUBIN, JAY DICKEY, VAN HILLEARY, MARGE ROUKEMA, MAC THORNBERRY.

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, March 13, 1996, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

REFORMING THE PRIMARY PROCESS

One of my interests is to make government work better. I have tried to contribute to that goal in a number of areas, including the reform of Congress and the Federal Reserve, among others. Lately, my attention has been drawn to the way we select presidents.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

Presidential nominees are chosen at their respective party's national conventions by delegates who were elected, either directly or indirectly, in the primaries, caucuses, or conventions of each state. The delegate selection process is governed by a combination of state laws and national and state party rules. In general, delegates are committed to certain candidates before they get to the party convention. The primaries now produce the nominee and the convention merely crowns him.

Most states, including Indiana, use the primary system to vote for presidential candidates. Under the primary system, an individual will vote, by secret ballot, for a candidate, who will be represented at the national convention by a certain number of delegates. In some states, the winner of the primary will take all the delegates available in that primary; in other states, including Indiana, delegates are awarded based on the candidates' proportion of the vote. The primary season begins in New Hampshire in late February, and most of the major primaries are held in March.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT SYSTEM

The primary system, while more open and democratic than the old convention system, has its drawbacks. The early primary states have an extraordinary influence on the outcome and that's one reason states are scrambling to vote earlier each year. It is far from clear that voters in the early primaries are representative of a national party, much less a national electorate. The present system in a sense violates the one-man one-vote principle. If you vote in the New Hampshire primary, your vote is probably worth 10 or 15 times as much in determining the outcome than the people who vote in Indiana. That bothers me. The low turnout in primaries is also worrisome. The average for all primaries is only about 30% of registered voters.

The front loading of the calendar is the most important single change to the American primary system in recent years. Campaigning starts earlier than ever before, costing millions of dollars. The schedule is so compressed that by the first of April almost all the delegates will have been selected. The vital primaries come thick and fast. It is very difficult to pause or regroup between them. If you do badly in one primary, you don't have much time to recover. Voters may not have enough time to consider which candidate is best for the party or the nation.

Candidates essentially nominate themselves for our consideration and they have to be a bit obsessed to go through the present primary selection system. My impression is that the media performs the screening role formerly done by party leaders and professionals. The media can be an important conduit of information about candidates, but they also tend to be more interested in the horse race aspects of a primary rather than fundamental questions, such as whether a candidate can govern or what is the candidate's vision.

REFORM PROPOSALS

There have been several proposals for reforming the current system. One proposal would involve selecting convention delegates on the first Tuesdays of March, April, May and June of each election year. Any state could choose any of those four dates, but the probable result would be a mixture of states from various regions on each of the four dates. The gap between the primary dates would allow voters and the media to examine the candidates with care, and the candidates would get a chance to catch their breath and have time for more thoughtful speeches.

Another suggestion is a national primary in which registered voters of all parties could vote on a single day. Such a primary would require an orgy of nationwide television advertising by all the candidates that would last for months and put more power in the hands of the party bosses, less in the hands of the people.

Still others want to reserve a third of the national convention seats for party professionals in order to postpone until the last moment the decision on who will get the presidential nomination. This approach would enhance the role for professional politicians in judging who has the right stuff to be president. I would not support such a proposal because it is inherently less democratic than the current primary system.

CONCLUSION

No single decision is more important to the United States than choosing a president. Primaries tell us whether or not a candidate can discern the issues that are on the minds of the American people and can frame a message and present it effectively to a variety of constituencies around the country. They also tell us whether he has the physical and emotional capabilities to sustain a campaign under high stress and assemble an effective political team and raise the money to support it.

The great advantage of the primary is that it allows ordinary Americans to pick their candidates for president. In the end the system has worked reasonably well. Nominees are usually picked who are widely known and widely approved. Money matters, but it's not everything.

I am inclined to think it is the kind of system that we can approve but we should not discard. I do have the uneasy feeling that we've separated the presidential nominating process from the governing process. A person can be very good at getting nominated. He may not necessarily be a very good president. I'm not sure primaries give us a candidate's core of political values or tell us if he has a firm sense of the direction in which he wants to lead the nation or whether he is secure with himself and with his own convictions and conscience.

Among our goals in reforming the primary system would be to assure wider participation in the selection process and cut the cost of a primary campaign. I am attracted to the idea of interregional primaries. We could set six dates between March and June for a series of interregional primaries. On each date a group of states of various sizes from different regions of the country would hold primary contests. The order could rotate.

Some say primaries are not efficient. They probably are not as efficient as the smoke filled convention. But they are less corruptible and the result is accepted. That's important in a democracy. It is the very democratic quality of the primary that makes it a little messy and a struggle.

CONGRATULATIONS BETH SHALOM OF WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Congregation Beth Shalom from my home State of Delaware. Two years ago, Congregation Beth Shalom, located in Wilmington, initiated what is known as "Mitzvah Day", a day when congregation members of all ages devote their time and energy to assist others in the community who are less fortunate and are in need. Mitzvah is the Hebrew word for commandments, and signifies righteous acts by individuals that are considered to be virtuous, kind, and considerate. In the Jewish faith, individuals are expected to carry out a mitzvah every day. In fact, in the Torah, which is the first of five books of Moses, some 613 mitzvot are listed to which Jews can aspire. Mitzvah Day is Congregation Beth Shalom's way of reminding the faithful of their obligations to their fellow man.

This Sunday, March 17, 1996, will mark the third annual Mitzvah Day, and I am pleased to join the good people of Congregation Beth Shalom for ceremonies signaling the start of another day when people will reach out to their neighbors to say they care and want to make life a bit more enjoyable for all. Those who will participate this Sunday and those who have helped others in previous years are known as mitzvah mavens; people who are concerned about their fellow human beings every day.

Before Mitzvah Day is over, they will have collected and sorted thousands of food items for the Food Bank in Newark; they will have baked bread and cookies for the families at the Ronald McDonald House in Wilmington; they will have cooked and served lunch to the clients at the Sojourners Place in Wilmington, who are overcoming drug and alcohol dependency; they will have visited and played bingo with the assisted living or nursing care residents at the Kutz Home and Parkview Nursing Home in Wilmington; and, they will have conducted numerous visits or had meals with congregation members who are homebound because of sickness or disability.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, the mitzvah mavens will have done all of this, and by Sunday evening, when the sun goes down, hundreds of Delawareans will feel just a bit better about themselves, some will have enjoyed one more meal than they thought they might, and Delaware will have had its quality of life improved that much more. All of this because the Congregation Beth Shalom in Wilmington, DE, encourages and supports kindness toward others and actions which can truly improve people's lives.

BELLFLOWER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND THE CITY OF BELLFLOWER

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute an institution and a community in California's 38th Congressional District whose history is a model of how the citizens of America's small towns—through their values, their hard work, and, in particular, their strong civic spirit—have made America strong. This year, the Bellflower Chamber of Commerce celebrates its 75th year of leadership. It is fitting that on this occasion, its history and the history of the city it has so diligently served be celebrated for what they have accomplished—and for what they can teach the world.

Bellflower was built by people of many backgrounds. Its early history began in 1784, as one of the first Spanish land grants conferred in California. Governor Pedro Fages rewarded Spanish leathercoat soldier Manuel Nieto with the largest of these grants. After the Spanish were ousted in the Mexican Revolution, Nieto's land grant was divided into five small ranchos which were distributed among his heirs. Bellflower would later be founded where the boundaries of three of these ranchos—Santa Gertrudes, Los Coyotes, and Los Cerritos—met.

The three ranchos prospered through California's Golden Age of the Ranchos, from the gold rush of the 1840's into the 1860's, when a terrible drought brought the rancho way of life to an end.

The ranchos were sold at auction to purchasers who, in addition to ranching, subdivided parts of them for small farming operations. The section that was to become Bellflower was subjected annually to terrible flooding from the San Gabriel River. It also had dense growth—willow, black berries, and bamboo—which meant that only the hardiest of farmers could settle here. And they did. Within a few years, the area was renowned for its large-sized crops. Fueled by the hard work and commitment of the early settlers, Bellflower's poultry, dairy, horticultural, and farming industries steadily grew. Hispanic and American farmers were soon joined by Dutch, Swiss, Belgian, Japanese, and Portuguese families.

With the establishment by the Pacific Electric Railway of the Somerset Station in 1902, Bellflower farmers were able to get their crops to markets and visitors were able to come to the Bellflower area via the "Big Red Cars." Soon after, land developers began laying out streets and selling parcels of land near the Somerset Station. Soon a town grew up. Though the area was still unnamed—some called it the New River Colony, others Somerset Acres—the residents were determined to build a town.

Following California's tradition of strong support for education, the first thing these residents did was to petition for a school district. That was in 1908. In the next year, they asked for a post office. They quickly received both.

The residents first asked for a post office under the name of Somerset. But postal authorities, wishing to prevent confusion, rejected the name because there already was a

Somerset in Colorado. Another subdivision in the area was known as Bellflower Acres, and its proponents championed that name for the new community. Although it is not known precisely how the selection was made by the area's residents, it was the one registered by postal officials.

It is not certain how the name Bellflower came into the picture in the first place. The most common explanation links the name with the orchard of Bellefleure apples grown by pioneer settler William Gregory.

By 1910, the business district began to develop. In 1913, Southern California Edison installed electric lines. In 1914, gas lines were brought into Bellflower. Up to 50 trains ran through the area each day to and from Los Angeles. The town was on its way. The only thing Bellflower lacked was a government.

In 1912, Los Angeles County had adopted a charter covering the government of the unincorporated towns. Bellflower—with its unincorporated status—lived under county government for the next 45 years.

But the civic pride of Bellflower's citizens was too strong to rely solely on Los Angeles County. Unable to form their own government, they organized the Bellflower Improvement Association in 1921 to serve as a representative body for all of the town's organizations and interests. The improvement association has 12 members. The following year—indicating the enthusiasm and civic spirit that has always been the hallmark of Bellflower—the association's membership had swelled to 80. That year—1922—it became known as the Bellflower Chamber of Commerce with R.J. Parsonson as president and a board consisting of Vice President Bruce Guernsey, Secretary J.C. Hertel, Treasurer C.A. Conrad, and Sergeant at Arms George McCormick.

Under the county's governing of unincorporated communities, there was no local body officially charged with looking after the affairs of the town. The chamber quickly filled his vacuum, "governing" for over 30 years through an unofficial town hall.

Since the Chamber had no legislative authority to make its decision binding, its effectiveness depended upon how well it served the community. Those early chamber members worked hard to gain the trust and respect of the residents. This tradition continues today.

It was during the years of unincorporation—1921 to 1957, when Bellflower became California's 348th city—that the area experienced impressive growth. Through the guidance of the chamber, Bellflower quickly became a highly respected and admired community.

One example of the chamber's determination to keep Bellflower strong and vital was the erection of the "52 Day Miracle Building" in 1938. At that time, the Los Angeles County Building Department offices were located in Bellflower. However, the administrators were considering a move to Downey where rent was cheaper. The Bellflower chamber spearheaded a drive to keep the county's offices in their town. With the chamber in the lead, local merchants provided funded to erect a new building. Incredibly, the project was completed—from idea to opening ceremonies—in just 52 days.

By the 1950's, the population of Bellflower became so large and varied that it could no longer be adequately governed under the old county charter system. With the chamber leading the way, Bellflower received its certification of incorporation on September 3, 1957.

Today, the Bellflower Chamber of Commerce remains a vital, contributing member of our area. Its history reminds us that a city is not built with bricks, mortar, and asphalt alone. It comes to life and remains vibrant and healthy through the commitment, dedication, hard work, and strong values of its residents. The history of the Bellflower community and the leadership provided by the Bellflower Chamber of Commerce are models of these values. California and the United States are indeed fortunate to have Bellflower and the commitment of its citizens.

HONORING SILVESTRE S. HERRERA

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Silvestre S. Herrera, of Phoenix, AZ, who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor 51 years ago by assaulting a German gun position on March 15, 1945.

On that day, Pfc. Silvestre Herrera, an acting squad leader/automatic rifleman, and Company E, 142d Infantry of the 36th (Texas) Infantry Division, was the lead element as it moved into German-held territory somewhere near Merrwiller, France.

Private First Class Herrera and other soldiers were moving along a wooded road when they were stopped by heavy enemy machinegun fire. As the rest of the platoon took cover from incoming fire, Private First Class Herrera moved forward and shot three German soldiers. Eight others surrendered.

As the platoon continued forward, they were stopped by more machinegun fire. Herrera ran toward some large rocks, intending to take cover. Instead, he stepped on a landmine and it blew him into the air. When he came down, he hit another land mine. He had lost both legs just below the knee.

Private First Class Herrera somehow managed to hold onto his M-1 rifle. He applied a bandage to his leg and dragged himself to the rocks. He braced himself and began firing at the enemy. He hit at least one of the Germans and forced the others to stop shooting and take cover.

Under Herrera's covering fire, his platoon moved in and killed the German machinegun crew. The platoon found a path through the minefield and located a bleeding and injured Herrera. They rushed him back to an aid station. Later, Herrera was sent to France and remained in a hospital until the war ended.

Herrera was decorated by President Truman on August 23, 1945, at the White House and in March 1946, he was discharged from the Army as a sergeant.

Although no books or films have been written about his heroics, Herrera's deeds are heralded. In 1956, the Phoenix Elementary School District named an elementary school after him. Herrera's own elementary school district, the Pendergast School District, also erected a bust to honor the Congressional Medal winner. The bust was unveiled at Pendergast School in Phoenix during a February reception. The bust, created by Zarco Guerrero, is part of the World War II Commemorative Community Program sponsored by the Department of Defense.